

9. (Twice Amended) Fiber-containing material made from a plurality of multi-component fibers, each multi-component fiber including at least first and second segments, the first and second segments being made respectively of a first polymer material and a second polymer material, the first polymer material having a higher melt temperature than that of the second polymer material, the second segments having been melted and being a binder of the fiber-containing material, the first and second segments having been at least partially split from each other prior to melting of the second segments, wherein the fiber-containing material has cross-over points of the first segments with each other, where the first segments cross each other, and wherein the second polymer material, of the second segments, is substantially only at the cross-over points where the first segments cross each other.

12. (Twice Amended) Fiber-containing material according to claim 11, wherein the non-woven fabric has a weight of 0.3 to 40 ounces per square yard.

20. (Twice Amended) Fiber-containing material according to claim 9, wherein the second segments have been completely split from the first segments prior to melting of the second segments.

30. (Twice Amended) Fiber-containing material made from a plurality

of multi-component fibers, each multi-component fiber including at least first and second segments, the first and second segments being made respectively of a first polymer material and a second polymer material, the first polymer material having a higher melt temperature than that of the second polymer material, the first segments of the plurality of multi-component fibers having cross-over points with each other, where the first segments cross each other, and wherein second polymer material, of the second segments, has been melted and is substantially only at the cross-over points where the first segments cross each other, to act as a binder of the fiber-containing material.

64. (Amended) Fiber-containing material according to claim 9, wherein the first and second segments have been at least partially split by differential shrinkage of the first and second polymer materials.

67. (Amended) Fiber-containing material, made by a process comprising the steps of:

collecting a plurality of multi-component fibers, the multi-component fibers having at least first segments and second segments respectively made of first and second polymer materials, the first polymer material having a higher melt temperature than that of the second polymer material;

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splitting the second segments at least partially from the first segments; and

after said splitting, thermally bonding the first segments, to form the fiber-containing material, by melting the second polymer material of the second segments,

wherein in the collecting step, the plurality of multi-component fibers form cross-over points with each other, and in the thermal bonding step the second polymer material of the second segments is melted so as to encapsulate the first segments at cross-over points of the first segments, the first segments crossing each other at the cross-over points of the first segments after the thermal bonding, and

wherein after the thermal bonding the second polymer material of the second segments is substantially only at the cross-over points of the first segments, where the first segments cross each other.

Please add the following new claims to the application:

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72. Fiber-containing material according to claim 9, wherein the first and second polymer materials are different types of polymer materials.

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73. Fiber-containing material according to claim 30, wherein the first

and second polymer materials are different types of polymer materials.

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Fiber-containing material according to claim 67, wherein the first and second polymer materials are different types of polymer materials.

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Fiber-containing material according to claim 30, wherein the second polymer material has been completely melted and is substantially only at the cross-over points where the first segments cross each other.

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Fiber-containing material according to claim 67, wherein in the thermal bonding the second polymer material of the second segments is completely melted.

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Fiber-containing material according to claim 30, wherein the second polymer material, of the second segments, substantially encapsulates said cross-over points and is substantially only at said cross-over points.--